

PERIODIC LABOUR FORCE SURVEY (PLFS) – ECONOMY

NEWS: The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for June 2025 has been released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

About the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- **Purpose and Scope:**
The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO) to generate regular and timely estimates of **employment and unemployment indicators** across both urban and rural areas of India.
- **Key Indicators Assessed:**
 - **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** It refers to the **percentage of persons aged 15 years and above who are either working or actively seeking/available for work** within the total population of that age group.
 - **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** The **proportion of persons who are currently employed** out of the total population aged 15 years and above.
 - **Unemployment Rate (UR):** It represents the **percentage of unemployed individuals among those who are part of the labour force**.
 - **Current Weekly Status (CWS):** Refers to the **activity status of individuals based on employment/unemployment during the 7 days preceding the survey date**, allowing a more dynamic and recent snapshot of labour trends.

Major Highlights from PLFS – June 2025

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):**
 - The **overall LFPR** for persons aged 15 years and above was **54.2% in June 2025**, slightly down from **54.8% in May 2025**.
 - LFPR was **higher in rural areas (56.1%)** compared to **urban areas (50.4%)**, reflecting the seasonal nature of rural labour activity.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):**
 - The **rural WPR** stood at **53.3%**, while the **urban WPR** was **46.8%** for individuals aged 15 years and above.
 - At the **national level**, the **overall WPR was recorded at 51.2%**, indicating more than half of the eligible working population was employed.
- **Unemployment Rate (UR):**
 - The **overall unemployment rate** for persons aged 15 years and above was **5.6%**.

- The rate remained **unchanged for males** but **decreased by 0.1 percentage point for females** compared to May 2025.
- Region-wise, **rural unemployment declined by 0.2 percentage points**, whereas **urban unemployment increased by 0.2 percentage points**, showing divergence in job market dynamics.
- **Reasons for Marginal Decline in LFPR and WPR:**
 - The drop in participation and employment rates was influenced by **seasonal fluctuations in agriculture**, with many farm-related jobs tapering off after the peak sowing season.
 - **Intense summer heatwaves** limited physically demanding outdoor work, especially in the informal sector.
 - In higher-income rural households, some **unpaid helpers (especially women)** withdrew from the workforce to **focus on domestic responsibilities**.

Key Government Initiatives to Boost Women's Labour Force Participation

- **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY):**
Offers **collateral-free micro-credit loans** to women for setting up small businesses, thus promoting **economic independence and entrepreneurship** among women, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):**
Aims to **eliminate gender-based discrimination**, promote **education and health of girls**, and **shift social attitudes**, which indirectly creates conditions for **greater female workforce participation** in the long term.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:**
By **extending paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks** for eligible women workers, the Act helps **retain women in the workforce post-childbirth**, especially in the formal sector.
- **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) by NITI Aayog:**
Offers **comprehensive support to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs** through access to **mentorship, finance, networking, and capacity building**, thereby fostering economic empowerment.
- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM):**
Empowers women through **collective organization into SHGs**, which are provided with **credit access, livelihood training, and market linkages**, particularly in rural and tribal areas.
- **National Creche Scheme:**
Supports **working mothers from unorganized sectors** by establishing **daycare centres**, ensuring that childcare responsibilities do not prevent women from participating in paid work.

- **Mission Shakti (2021–2025):**

A flagship programme of the **Ministry of Women and Child Development**, it integrates initiatives for **women's safety, welfare, and empowerment**, helping women become **active participants in economic and social development**.

- **Women in Science and Engineering – KIRAN (WISE-KIRAN):**

Between 2018 and 2023, the programme supported **1,962 women scientists**, providing **career re-entry support, fellowships, and research opportunities**, thereby improving gender parity in STEM fields.

Way Ahead and Policy Implications

- **Addressing Urban Unemployment and Structural Gaps:**

The **rise in urban unemployment** and **marginal decline in LFPR/WPR** suggest that **job creation in urban and non-agricultural sectors** remains a key challenge. There's a need for **diversified employment opportunities** aligned with urban skill profiles.

- **Environmental Factors and Employment Patterns:**

The impact of **climatic extremes such as heatwaves** on labour participation underscores the importance of **climate-resilient livelihoods**, particularly for outdoor and informal sector workers.

- **Need for Real-Time Data Monitoring:**

Continued monthly tracking of labour market indicators through PLFS is essential to **identify trends, seasonal variations, and emerging vulnerabilities**, thereby enabling **evidence-based and timely policy interventions**.

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